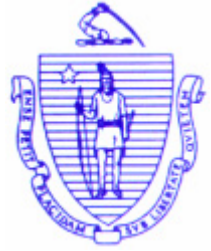




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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS  
SCHEDULED FOR MAY 3 & 4, 2004**

Under the provisions of M.G.L. Ch 30A and pursuant to the authority found in M.G.L. Ch. 130 ss. 17, 17A, 80, 100A and 104, Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) have scheduled hearings on the following regulatory proposals. Contact DMF for draft regulations and further details.

- 1. DMF proposals to amend reporting requirements for Massachusetts seafood dealers (322 CMR 7.07) to:**
  - a. require daily electronic reporting of all fish purchased directly from fishermen by state-permitted dealers;
  - b. eliminate dealer reporting via the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system;
  - c. implement a trip identifier requirement for dealers; and
  - d. require dealers to report the disposition of fish purchased.
- 2. DMF proposals to amend non-commercial lobster regulations (322 CMR 6.01 & 6.02), to create area-based lobster regulations for size limits, v-notch definitions, escape vent sizes and bag limits:**
  - a. Establish two management zones in state waters (one north of Cape Cod, the Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area; and the other southeast & west of Cape Cod, Southeastern Recreational Lobster Area) that generally coincide with the commercial area boundaries for LMAs 1, 2, and OCC;
  - b. Amend current minimum/maximum lobster size regulations by establishing a 5" max. size in the Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area (min. size would remain at 3 1/4") and a 3 3/8" min. size in the Southeastern Recreational Lobster Area;
  - c. Amend current v-notch definitions by adopting a "zero-tolerance" definition in the Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area (a "V" shaped notch at least 1/4 inch and not greater than a 1/2 inch in depth and tapering to a sharp point in the flipper next to and to the right of the center flipper as viewed from the rear of the female lobster when the underside of the lobster is down). The Southeastern Recreational Lobster Area would maintain the ASMFC v-notch definition that currently is in place for the recreational lobster fishery;
  - d. Amend escape vent minimum sizes by increasing to 2" x 5 3/4" or two circular vents of 2 1/2" for pots fished in the Southeastern Recreational Lobster Area. The Gulf of Maine Recreational Lobster Area would retain the current non-commercial escape vent size of 1 15/16" x 5 3/4" or two circular vents of 2 7/16"; and
  - e. Establish a recreational daily bag limit of 10 lobsters applicable to recreational lobstermen while fishing or while traveling to and from fishing grounds either
    - i. in the Southeastern Recreational Lobster Area; or
    - ii. in all state waters.
- 3. Marine Fisheries proposal to amend commercial striped bass regulations (322 CMR 6.07):**
  - i. open the 2004 commercial fishery on Sunday, July 11, 2004;
  - ii. reduce the current 40-fish limit on Sunday through Wednesdays to a 10-fish on Sundays (and the first day of the commercial fishing season) and a 20 fish on Mondays, Tuesdays, & Wednesdays; and
  - iii. accept comments on whether striped bass must be eviscerated prior to first sale.
- 4. Marine Fisheries proposal to require special authorization for any project related to the construction, reconstruction, repair, or alteration of any anadromous fish passageway (322 CMR 7.03).**

5. ***Marine Fisheries* proposal to enact a year-round 10-cod daily recreational bag limit (322 CMR 6.07).** This proposal would apply to all harvest within state waters as well as to all vessels fishing in any portion of the EEZ and landing in a Massachusetts port.
6. **Accept comments on recent *Marine Fisheries* emergency action that restricted cod fishing in an area of Massachusetts Bay north of Boston from the shoreline eastward to the 70° 45' longitude, south of 42° 30' latitude, and north of 42° 24' latitude (322 CMR 8.15).** *Marine Fisheries* seeks comments on whether to enact any of the following restrictions as a final rule for 2004 or to adopt other measures to protect cod aggregations and prevent regulatory discards:
  - i. For gillnetters:
    - gillnetting prohibited during Dec 1 – March 31.
  - ii. For longliners:
    - prohibited from fishing more than 500 hooks;
    - must use only circle hooks at least as large as 11/0; and
    - may fish only between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.
7. **Accept comments on emergency regulations to amend scup bag limits, size limits and seasons to accomplish a 40% reduction in recreational catch.**
8. **A public petition to lower the lobster trap limit in state waters from 800 to 600 (322 CMR 6.13).**

**Two public hearings have been scheduled:**

Monday, May 3, 2004 (7PM) at Massachusetts Maritime Academy (101 Academy Dr., Buzzards Bay) & Tuesday, May 4, 2004 (7PM) at the Gloucester High School (32 Leslie Johnson Rd). Comments received by e-mail, fax or mail will be accepted until 5PM on Friday, May 7, 2003.

For further information please visit our website at [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).